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ABSTRACT

In many respects the 18 months from June 1941 to December 1942--from the German assault on Soviet Russia to the conclusion of the first year of actual United States participation in World War II--was a brief interval of realism in the United States perception of the Soviet Union. The editorialists of "The New York Times" (probably the most influential newspaper in the United States) were in accord with public sentiment in regarding the military cooperation of the Soviet Union as a blessing offered as a result of expediency and, therefore, as something to be accepted with the same expedient outlook. The heroic defense of Stalingrad late in 1942 gave both the Russian people and the Soviet regime higher status in the eyes of the United States public. Henceforth, "The New York Times" editorials were devoted to researching and presenting similarities between the Soviet Union and the United States rather than differences. Since sentiment marched steadily from opposition to support--from hatred to idealization--it was questionable whether the United States was realistic in its international affairs during the 18 months under consideration. (BZ)

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BY

DONALD O. DEWEY

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NEVER HAS RUSSIA STOOD SO HIGH:

The New York Times' Assessment, 1941-1942

by

Donald O. Dewey

In many respects it seems that the eighteen months from June, 1941, to December, 1942--from the German assault on Soviet Russia to the conclusion of the first year of actual American participation in World War II--was a brief interval of realism for Americans in their attitude toward their new Soviet ally. Although Americans remained suspicious of the Soviet economic and political systems, the obvious advantages gained from the inclusion of 200 million Russians within the international force arrayed against Adolf Hitler decreed ready acceptance of Soviet military assistance.

The editorialists of the New York Times (probably the most influential newspaper in the United States) were in accord with public sentiment in regarding the military cooperation of the Soviet Union as a blessing offered as a result of expediency and, therefore, as something to be accepted with the same expedient outlook. They would not go so far then as to agree with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill that any enemy of Hitler automatically became a democrat[1]-- at least for the duration of the war--but they were happy to note that "a Nazi gets his quietus just as effectively from a Soviet as from a Jeffersonian bullet."[2]

Even after the entrance of the United States into the world conflict, American opinion remained cautious in its view of its huge and extremely

"different" neighbor to the west. Throughout the last half of 1941 and most of 1942 the Soviet Union was on trial in American eyes. The final trial was in blood. The gruesome but heroic defense of Stalingrad late in 1942 gave both the Russian people and the Soviet regime higher status in the eyes of Americans. Henceforth, New York Times editorials were devoted to ferreting out and exposing similarities between Russia and America, rather than differences. The discovery of elements of capitalism in the Soviet economic system; the belated realization that Stalin's pre-war diplomacy had been quite consistently anti-fascist; yes, even the location of occasional traces of continued religious sentiment among the Russians were the theme of Times editorials of the later war years.

Since American sentiment toward Russia marched steadily from opposition to support--from hatred to idealization--it is questionable if this country really was being realistic in its international affairs during the eighteen months now under consideration. True, there were instances when Americans were expedient and admitted as much; but expediency and realism are not necessarily the same. A truly rational attitude toward international associates would, of necessity, undergo "ups and downs." Yet the changing sentiment toward Russia reflected in the New York Times editorials of this period followed the "onward and upward ever" course of chauvinistic song-writers. Apparently the "realistic" attitude toward Russia which was notable at times during the early portion of the Anglo-Russian and Russo-American rapproachement was merely a momentary stopping-place on the undeviating course from hatred of everything Russian to idealization even of what had been the blackest of the black--Soviet methods and motives.[3]

Although American public opinion toward Soviet Russia followed a steadily advancing course, the rate of acceleration was seldom rapid. American antagonism against the Soviet Union had been so intense before this long-range "change of attitude" was initiated by Hitler's June attack, that the nation found it difficult to conceive of the Russians as true allies. Demonstrating the extent of continued antagonism for the Soviet Union in the month before Hitler attacked was this editorial comment in the New York Times.

> We may be sure . . . that no move or combination among the dictators will give aid or comfort to the democratic nations. Every indication proves that they are not really leagued together; the latest conflict between their ambitions and their interests may flare into open conflict at any moment. But by their common wish to destroy the order based on economic, political and spiritual freedom, they are leagued against the democracies, and to lose sight of that fundamental bond is a dangerous delusion.[4]

The Times was not caught unawares by the outbreak of war between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Seven weeks before the Hitler blitzkrieg was unleashed, the editorial staff was already anticipating open conflict between the ~~eastern~~ continental powers and was warning against befriending either of these predatory nations.

After a quarter-century of mistrust for Russia by American government, people, and press, it is not surprising that Hitler's eastward march on June 22, 1941, wrought no overnight revolution in sentiment regarding the Russian government. The Times editorials concerning this new turn of the tides of warfare aptly demonstrate how intense was the continuing antagonism against the Stalin regime: For the first five days after the tremendous Nazi assault against the U.S.S.R., each editorial on the Russo-German war hammered continually at the theme of American hatred for the Soviet government. The high-water mark of animosity was past, however, for on June 26th, it was finally admitted that "we bear no ill will against the Russian people."[5]

This statement, however short, was the first friendly comment on anything Russian in Times editorials for the week following the invasion of Russia. Even that remark is buried in a paragraph dominated by comments such as these:

> The rest of us have no use whatever for the Government of Russia. . . .we have only the utmost detestation for the brutal regime of Stalin. And we have not the least desire to enhance the prestige of that regime, or to hail it as a new-found friend, or to help prolong its stay in power, or to increase its capacity to do us evil.

This grudging acceptance of the Russian people did not institute a rapid acceptance of the Soviet Union as a whole. No spectacular reversal of American opinion toward Russia followed on the heels of the storm-troopers marching toward Moscow. Yet there was a gradual befriending of Hitler's newest foe. The New York Times segmented the Russian population and extended the clasp of friendship to one group at a time, while reiterating its hostility to the "untouchables." Russian society was divided into three groups--Russian people, Red Army, and Soviet state--and the Times' approval was meted out in that order. Soon after the invasion of Russia, the newspaper admitted that the Russians were as worthy as any other people and that they would be valuable allies, if not impeded by an inefficient army and corrupt government. To be befriended next was the Red Army. The sturdy resistance of Russian troops in the summer of 1941 convinced the Times' editorial staff that the Red Army of 1941-1942 bore slight resemblance to the massive unit which had committed such blunders and suffered such casualties in Finland in 1940. This realization brought acceptance to a portion of the Soviet Union, but the Soviet government was still regarded with extreme contempt. Not until the rigors of the heroic

Battle of Stalingrad did the Russian government receive the approval already granted the Russian people and army. During the battle the Times first spoke of the "close and friendly understanding now prevailing between the Government of Russia and the two great democracies of the West."[6] So not until fourteen months after the beginning of the Russo-German war was the Soviet Union truly an ally, in the eyes of the New York Times.

But how different is the common conception of the change in American opinion following the German invasion of Russia! The idea that there was a rapid change in sentiment was a frequent, though mistaken, belief. Thomas A. Bailey , for example, asserts that Hitler's "fateful attack on 'the Mongol halfwits' of Russia effected an overnight revolution in American public opinion." Yet the only significant change which was notable in the New York Times, immediately following the assault of June 22nd, was a sudden recognition of the virtues of the Russian peasants. Bailey further claims that "on June 21, 1941, Stalin was a cynical, self-seeking, ruthless aggressor; on June 22 he was an ally--a very welcome ally--of those who were seeking to halt Hitlerism."[7] True, Stalin was regarded as a temporary dam against the flood of Naziism, but on June 22nd he was still considered by the New York Times and the majority of American people to be just as cynical, just as self-seeking, and just as ruthless as he had been the day before. Three months after the German attack, a Fortune poll indicated that only the barest margin of those questioned felt that the Russian government was morally superior to that of Nazi Germany.[8] But despite continued mistrust for the Soviet leaders, Americans' respect for

the Russian people rapidly increased as the horrors that the Russians suffered in defense of their Fatherland became known.

The Times' admission on June 26th, four days after the German attack, that "we bear no ill will against the Russian people" is not a particularly striking concession; but it was the first friendly editorial comment on anything Russian in the nearly two years since the Russo-German Non-Aggression Treaty. During the period of collaboration between the two dictatorships, the newspaper had frequently reminded its readers that the German leaders, rather than the German people, were our enemies. The "neutral" Russians were never granted such a concession. But when Russia became a participant in the conflict against Hitler, the Russian people, too, came in for their share of praise; even though antagonism for the Soviet government continued.

In fact, the Times' new-found respect for the Russian people had, within a week after the German attack, provided a rationalization for the overthrow of the Soviet regime. An editorial on the Russian peasant concluded, "Our world will be imperfect until he is free and a friend of freemen everywhere."[9] Exactly a month after Hitler turned eastward, it was remarked that "the German attack may yet turn out to be the blow that releases the dormant spirit of the Slav Giant."[10] In August, proposals for medical aid to Russia were approved on the grounds that "it may save men who will build up a new and free Russia;"[11] and two months later the Times was confident that the sterling qualities of the Russian people would outlast communism,[12] and that the citizens had learned their own strength in the shock of war and thus might successfully demand civil rights from a reluctant government.[13] Even

when the newspaper's anti-Soviet attitude had greatly lessened, it continued to remind its readers that the United States was being aided by the Russians, not the Soviets; that Hitler was being turned back by Russian common men, not Bolsheviks.[14] The "Russian soul" became an especially favored topic of editorialization, and the Times frequently pondered the irony of history which so consistently placed Russia in a position of "defending freedom for other nations while itself remaining enslaved."[15]

Of course it was the Russian army which gave us time for reappraisal of Russian people and "soul." This army had been misjudged more completely than any other portion of the Soviet Union in the years of Russia's uncomfortable alliance with the Nazis. The extremely low opinion of the competence of the Red Army made the Times fail to recognize the tremendous significance of the shift in alignments which had just occurred. It urged the Allies to profit all they could from Hitler's excursion into the immensities of Russia but warned against expecting large dividends. One editorial said:

> . . . if a man is unfortunate enough to find himself in a field with a mad bull and the bull turns suddenly on a terrier that has been following at his heels, the man does not need to share the terrier's 'ideology' in order to hope that the chase will be a long one, and that the bull will break his neck. Anything that we can do to prolong Hitler's chase of Stalin will be to our advantage.[16]

But the chase was expected to be short. Observing that "the quality of the strategists and the equipment that [Hitler] will encounter will be definitely inferior to what he has already met in the West," the Times assumed that Hitler would achieve "his main military objectives in Russia within a few weeks."[17] Early in July, 1941, the admirable fighting spirit of the Russian soldiers was admitted, but the same editorial questioned the capability of the Russian General Staff to handle the problems of defending a two thousand-

mile front.[18]

As time passed and the anticipated Russian collapse did not materialize, editorials gave increasing praise for the morale and courage of the Red Army. Yet, the best that could be expected was that the Russians might be able to delay the inevitable German victory; the journal reminded its readers that Russia had struggled on for three years after the crushing defeats of Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes in 1914.[19] The majority of those questioned that same day in a Gallup poll likewise assumed Germany must prevail. Seventy-two per cent of those contacted hoped for a Russian victory, compared to only four per cent desiring a German triumph; yet only twenty-two per cent of those wanting a Russian victory anticipated one.[20]

After a month and a half of Russo-German conflict, the New York Times was willing to concede that the Russian army was the strongest opponent that Hitler had yet encountered;[21] and nine months later (May 14, 1942) the Red Army was claimed to be better organized, as well as bigger, than the combined armies of all the other Allies.[22] The newspaper's explanation of the forces which had given birth to this efficient fighting machine ~~varied~~ shifted with its conception of the Soviet regime ~~varied~~. In the first month of the Russo-German war, the fighting spirit of the Red Army was credited to "the attachment of the peasant masses to 'Mother Russia', the incoherent but cohesive force of Russian patriotism," rather than the "mumbling cult of Stalin."[23] Yet, a half-year later, the Times agreed that Stalin himself had played a considerable role in the forging of the Russian military force. The newspaper was at first suspicious of the suggestion of former Ambassador Joseph Davies that the Stalin purges of 1937 (which had for so long been among the

Times' pet topics for "viewing with alarm") had actually strengthened the Red Army. Yet the Times made the same suggestion in the "Topics of the Times" column only two months after Davies.[24] And on March 15, 1942, the newspaper did not blush to surpass even Davies ! , for then it credited the Finnish war, as well as the 1937 army purges, for helping to create the army which was preventing Hitler from making his dreaded westward turn again.[25] The purging of millions of Soviet citizens in the 1930's and the unequal war against little Finland were not yet morally justifiable, in the eyes of the New York Times; but neither were they considered diabolical when it was realized that the purges had eliminated divisive elements which might have proven harmful in this life-and-death struggle, and that the Finnish campaign had been a warm-up contest in preparation for the greater struggle to come. The greatest tribute to Russia's "political general" came at the end of the first of four long years of Russo-German war when Stalin, "the man responsible for the handling of Russia's unconquerable millions," and German General Erwin Rommel were proclaimed the military geniuses of the war to that point.[26]

Although American friendship for the Russian people was an almost immediate response to Hitler's military venture, and although respect for the Red Army was a slower but inevitable result of the unforeseen vigor of the Russian defense, the American hatred of the Soviet government, which had festered for a quarter of a century, could be lessened only by large doses of time. Having long chided American Communists for their grotesque flip-flops for the sake of the all-important "party line," the New York Times, when speaking of the Soviet government in the early war years, practiced with pleasure its own advice that policy changes be made only after long and careful consideration. The mistaken

belief that Americans were quick to accept any enemy of Hitler as a close friend still persists. But the intemperate language used by the New York Times to characterize "our new ally" in the editorials of the week following the invasion of Russia, indicates that there was no sudden love affair between American Republicans and Democrats, and Russian Bolsheviks. The Soviet government was branded as totalitarian and brutal, as well as notoriously incompetent. Premier Stalin was cited for betraying the international Communist movement, for grovelling in the Nazi dirt, and for enslaving and starving his people; and his international policies were characterized as double-dealing, gangsterism, treachery, and stupidity. Certainly not the language of one anxious to embrace a former enemy.

The fervor and frequency of such utterances in New York Times editorials waned as the war continued, but the sentiment underlying them remained until after the attack upon the Hawaiian Islands had brought the United States into uncomfortable alliance with the Soviet Union. In the interval between the mid-1941 German attack on Russia and the December assault of the Japanese on American territory, every month brought at least one reminder from Times editorials that Russia was "an ally of necessity," that her "record of treachery" made betrayal of the Allies likely, that our friendship of expediency must not increase American tolerance for the Communist regime. Just a month before the Americans were so rudely thrust into the conflict, Times editorialists were as unable as the American public to detect any moral difference between Stalin and Hitler.

> We are aiding Russia today not because there is any moral choice between Hitler and Stalin, but because Nazi Germany is much stronger than Soviet Russia and incomparably the greater military threat to ourselves. We must never lose sight of the fact that while Hitler's invasion has made Russia's fight our fight, it has not made Russia's cause our cause. Stalin's invasion of Finland was as ruthless and unprovoked as any of Hitler's.[27]

With this editorial the newspaper reached its peak of expediency in separating the "military and moral aspects" of the war. However moral the position of Finland in its renewal of warfare with Russia--with the aid of Adolf Hitler--it "increases the threat to our own future." And however foul the government of Stalin, it was to our interests to do all we could to help him continue monopolizing the time and attention--and bullets--of the Nazi legions. Such unemotional weighing of advantage was possible on November 6, 1941, but it was a different story after December 7th. Emotion could be kept out of war policy discussions only so long as the United States could keep herself out of war. After the Pearl Harbor attack, there began the apparently inevitable white-washing of our "great Russian ally."

But, typically, the change was not as rapid as might be expected. In fact, the initial post-Pearl Harbor reaction to the Russians was one of anger. The failure of the Soviets to enter the war against Japan sired a momentary rage, with the Times even hinting that the United States might concentrate on the Pacific war to show the Russians how badly they would fare against Hitler without American arms. Fortunately this pique had subsided by January, 1942, and there began a "reassessment" of the Soviet regime which surpasses even the prior about-face of the Times' view of the Red Army. As early as January 25th, the admission that individual freedoms had not yet been achieved in such countries as Russia, China, and the Philippines was followed by the bold assumption that "a victory of the United Nations will mean that freedom, under law, in peace, will become the objective for those and all other countries."[28] Once again, Americans were making the world "safe for democracy!" A week later Russian political

leadership, for the first time, received a portion of the praise regulary alloted by the Times to the peasants and soldiers.[29] Soon Soviet economic experiments such as the five-year plans were viewed without rancor; and generally the Times found them to be good--for Russians, that is, not for Americans.

Still, strong elements of anti-Sovietism remained until the summer of 1942. Early that year, the Times reiterated that the loyalty of the Russian people was directed to "Mother Russia," not the Soviet regime;[30] and in February the newspaper was still lumping together Stalin, Lenin, and Hitler as prime examples of uncivilized men.[31] Though such editorial comments recurred in the early months of 1942, the steadily lessening frequency of such anti-Soviet remarks indicated that a significant change in attitude was under way. The extent of this reversal of opinion was demonstrated in June, when the New York Times disclaimed any wish to overthrow the Soviet Union.

The groundwork for this reversal was laid a month earlier in an editorial which stated that, although the Russians were not fighting in defense of democracy, they were "fighting none the less. . . in defense of the only kind of world in which democracy can live."[32] Then, on June 14, 1942, came the startling advice that:

> Russia cannot be asked to give up her economic experiment. . .
> We must all come to understand that behind economic systems are people, and that in the essentials of their desires and their needs, under all systems of government and production, under all shades of color, they are more alike than unlike. The Russian people have earned our admiration and our friendship. We hope to earn theirs. With these sentiments the difference in the economic and political systems under which we live need not be harmful.[33]

And thus collapsed the New York Times' advocacy of a rapid end for that "economic experiment." This war casualty was not required by military necessity; rather, it was due to a perennial American desire to idealize their wartime allies. A week later, the Times recalled that Russian policy from 1939 to 1941 had been "harshly judged in this country,"[34] and expressed its hope for a world-wide "brotherhood of peace." Soon thereafter came the epic struggle in the "waist-land" between the Don and Volga Rivers. As the stubborn defenders of Stalingrad continued to amaze the world, the New York Times, along with most Americans, reiterated admiration and friendship for the Soviet Union. As the offensive slipped gradually into Russian hands and a German defeat of huge proportions seemed possible, the Times editorialists could not even express its usual anger at the demanding tone of Stalin's autumal plea for an Anglo-American "second front."

> . . . by blood, sweat and tears Mr. Stalin and his countrymen have earned the right to say what they think.
>
> We think the whole democratic world, setting aside differences of opinion as to strategy, is willing to say to Mr. Stalin and his people that never in all history, certainly never during the past quarter of a century, has Russia stood so high in the respect and admiration of the free nations.[35]

Despite the newspaper's new-found respect for the fruits of Stalin's "blood, sweat and tears," there remained an element of reserve toward the Soviet Union. The Times continued to warn America's most vociferous second front advocates against sentimentalizing the Russian position. An editorial pointed out that Russia was then fighting only because she had been attacked; that her policies were not directed to the protection of the United States from attack, even if her firm defense against Hitler might indirectly

provide a defensive barrier for the Americans.[36] Even this firm hold on reality was lost in the years to come, when the Russians' presence on the battlefield was interpreted as the result of their refusal to surrender their freedoms to the dictatorship of Hitler.[37] Thus the Russian defensive war, which had been interpreted late in 1942 as merely the reaction of the Soviet Union to attack, had become by mid-1943 a positive, even a virtuous, act of the Russians.

Naturally, the newspaper's attitude regarding lend-lease aid to Russia and a second front also underwent a complete change, following roughly the same trend as the changing sentiment toward the Russians themselves. At first, demands for a second front only hastened the Times' acceptance of lend-lease. To meet increasing demands that Britain land a military force in France, the Times responded with increasing support for lend-lease. Send supplies, it said, not men!

The New York Times' change in attitude toward military aid to the U.S.S.R. came in three sudden leaps. Immediately after the German attack upon Soviet Russia, the Times imperiously rejected all demands for aid to "our new ally." This sentiment continued for two months, until nearly three weeks after President Roosevelt had announced he would send supplies to the Russians. Then the Times decided that some aid might be sent to the Russians, so long as the British continued to receive the greater part and Russia's share was confined solely to specific needs. Just what these specific needs might be was not specified, but the newspaper made it plain that they should be greatly limited in quantity. Finally, in November, 1941, the continuance of the Soviets in the war became the prime motive,

and the newspaper justified the expenditure of millions of American dollars to achieve this goal. This remained the Times' attitude for the remainder of the war, except for a period of pettishness resulting from Soviet reluctance to follow the United States into war with Japan. The anger was only momentary, however, and is significant primarily for its demonstration of how much anti-Soviet feeling continued despite the gradual acceptance of Russia as a necessary ally. The Times became a firm advocate of military aid to Russia long before it accepted the Soviet regime as a suitable associate; the Red Army had proven its ability to stand against Hitler and, in the frightening days of 1941, military capability outweighed moral suitability.

The Times' early response to proposals for aiding Russia was demonstrated the day after Hitler's attack. Recognizing the advantage to the United States and Britain of prolonging the Russian defense as long as possible, the editorialists determined that the best way to achieve this was to send all possible military equipment--especially airplanes--to Britain.[38] The English then would bomb the daylights out of German industrial centers, and this would presumably hinder Hitler's Russian campaign. But the idea of shipping supplies to Russia was not even mentioned. The following day the "aid to Britain" theme was reiterated and strengthened by the assurance that Russia would be knocked out of the war "within a few weeks."[39]

> These few weeks are the time to go all out in reducing to the maximum possible extent the German war effort in Russia. With this end in view we ought at once to make available to Britain, for an air attack on the western front, every plane that we can send abroad.

The issue of direct aid to Russia was finally brought into the editorial columns two days later, on June 25, 1941, following President Roosevelt's declaration that he would aid the new ally but that he had not yet determined the "exact form" of the aid. The Times replied:

> In all probability it will be found, upon examination of the question, that aid to Russia can best take the form of redoubled aid to Britain. That is swifter, safer and certain to be at least equally effective.[40]

With the question of aiding the Soviet Union finally in the open, the New York Times launched into vigorous denials of the competence of the Russian government properly to use any matériel which the U. S. might ship there. Demanding that the slogan "Help Russia" be replaced by "Stop Hitler," an editorial declared that aid to Russia would be poured on barren soil. Particular attention was devoted to the claim of Russian incompetence:

> Even if we were willing to trust a Russian Government which we have never trusted in the past, there is the question of competence as well as of good faith. The Government of Russia is notoriously incompetent.[41]

Even the mid-July contention that it would be folly to withhold military support, "for mere ideological reasons," from any nation fighting Nazi Germany[42] indicated no true change in feeling; the journey of Harry Hopkins to Moscow for a survey of Russian needs, for instance, caused the Times to reiterate that "nothing should divert us from our fixed policy of putting the West Front first."[43] The climax of the "no aid to Russia" phase of New York Times editorial policy came August 6, 1941, the day after the Department of State informed Russian Ambassador Konstantin Oumansky that the United States would give the Russians all "practicable" economic

assistance and grant "unlimited licenses" for the export of "a wide variety of articles and materials" to Russia. The New York Times' angry response was to remind the State Department that Russia had been "playing ball" with Hitler in the summer of 1939 and had spent the following winter in Finland.

> Nor can we ignore the factor of ultimate good faith. Stalin is on our side today. Where will he be tomorrow? In the light of his record, no one can say that he will not switch sides again, making a treacherous peace with Germany and become, in effect, Hitler's Gauleiter in the East. We should be in a fine state of affairs if we succeeded in landing a hundred bombers on Russian soil just in time for this reconciliation.[44]

"Where will he be tomorrow?" This query assumes a prophetic nature in view of the post-war complexion of European society. This assessment of Stalin was made at a time when opposition to Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism came as a matter of course. Yet this speculation on the future course of Russo-American relations was far more accurate than many which would follow later in the war, when idealization of the Soviet Union was in flower.

Considering the intensity of this antagonism to aid-for-Russia proposals, it is amazing, just three weeks later, to find the New York Times defending the Anglo-Russian occupation of little Iran to keep open for American goods this vital "supply line to Russia."[45] The fluctuation of Times sentiment on the question of helping to supply the Red Army was shown in editorials three weeks after that. On September 19, 1941, Times editorials recognized that United States arms "must be sent where they are needed most"--with no haggling--[46] but the very next day Britain's prior claims to American assistance were reiterated, along with the warning that

Stalin could not be trusted:

> . . . the help we give to the British would be far safer than help sent to the Soviet Government. The question of bad faith cannot be overlooked here; Stalin's record of treachery cannot be simply forgotten.
>
> On balance the arguement still favors sending the bulk of American aid to Britain, while aid to Russia should be only what certain special circumstances or needs justify.[47]

This was the initial editorial response to Roosevelt's plan for extension of lend-lease aid to Russia, which had received prominent Page One display that day and the two preceding days.

Early in October, even while justifying the shipment of arms to Russia on military grounds, the Times made much of the "strong case to be made for sending the great bulk of our aid to Britain."[48] Then how account for this remark only a month later?[49]

> The problem is essentially one of keeping the main body of Hitler's armies occupied in the East by keeping Russia in the war. That can be done best by sending her the planes, tanks and guns to supply her vast reserves of man power.

The answer comes in the concluding sentence: "British labor can help the Soviets best by staying at factory benches, turning out weapons for Russia, and by leaving problems of grand strategy to Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his expert advisers." By then, demands for a British "second front" on the coast of France were advanced as the only way to keep Russia in the war, and the Times' response--Send Weapons, Not Men--was a decisive factor in bringing over the New York journal to advocacy of matériel aid for Russia.

This sentiment was, in the long run, strengthened by the entrance of the United States into the war, and the Times remained a vigorous proponent of military aid for Russia until the very end of the war. But the belatedly

recognized advantages of helping the Russians stand against Hitler did not seem so evident immediately after the Japanese air thrust at Pearl Harbor. When four days had passed and the Russians had not yet leaped into warfare with the empire whose islands pointed like a dagger toward the Siberian mainland, the newspaper proposed a strict quid pro quo basis for lend-lease aid to Russia.

> If on the one hand, the Soviet Government fails to aid us in our war against Japan, then the United States would be justified for more than one reason in discontinuing its aid-to-Russia policy. This discontinuance would be likely to occur, not on the purely sentimental ground that the Soviet Government has been "ungrateful" for our actual and promised help in the past, but on the practical ground that our airplanes, ship bottoms and other matériel [sic] may be required for what seems a more immediate danger to our own interests.[50]

All this despite the pious assertion, the day after the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor, that Hitler must remain the Allies' principal objective. By mid-December the passion had somewhat subsided; then the Times only questioned "whether Russia is right in supposing that Japan will bide her time until the Soviets find conditions ideal for them to attack" and "whether it would not serve Russian interests better now to turn over to the United States the bases it needs for effective warfare in the East."[51] Throughout this brief period, when animosity toward the Soviet Union again burst forth, there was no reference to the Russo-Japanese Pact which had been so upsetting when it was signed eight months before. Apparently here was one occasion when the Russians could break both pact and promise without being branded a traitor by the West! But the Russians were too cautious to bite, and fortunately the antagonism against them died down before the end of the month. 1942 opened with a bright outlook for good relations between the United States--or the New York Times, at any rate--and the Soviet Union. On January 2nd the Russian

front was described as "by all odds the main battle line,"[52] and two weeks after that the Times said the American goal should be to prevent the Japanese from attacking Russia from the rear.[53]

This concluded the most spectacular instance of a rapid about-face regarding the Soviet Union which the New York Times editorial policy underwent during World War II. Some of its reversals were nearly as spectacular as those of the American Communists, for whom the Times showed such contempt throughout the war, but this was the only case in which the newspaper mustered anything approaching the "flip-flop" speed of the American followers of the Communist "party-line." Calmed by more judicious thought in the month following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Times foresook any claims that Roosevelt's lend-lease policy should be junked. In fact, the newspaper became such a firm adherent of military aid for the one nation that had proved capable of halting Hitler, that it continued to urge supply shipments during the interim between the victory in Europe and the Russian attack on Japan[54]--even though it was uncertain whether the Soviets would enter the war in Asia.

Public opinion polls indicate that by early 1942 the American people were equally conscious of the necessity of helping to oil the Soviet military machine. A Fortune poll of February, 1942, demonstrates that the number of those wanting the Soviet Union to be treated as a full partner in the war effort had nearly doubled in four months. In February, 41.1 per cent favored this policy, compared to 21.9 in October, 1941. Those approving only of partial cooperation fell, percentage-wise, from 51.4 to 43.2, but the spectacular change was among those demanding an immediate end to Russian aid. Only 4.4 per cent favored this action, while 13.5 per cent had made this

choice in the earlier poll.[55] The extent of public trust in Russia is further indicated in a Gallup poll of March, 1942. The question, "Can we trust Russia to cooperate in the post-war period?," brought a split vote, thirty-nine per cent voting "yes" and the same amount doubting Russian cooperation. This question was asked periodically through the war, with those expecting post-war cooperation remaining in the majority until the harsh realities of the post-war period were actually upon them. (See Table #1)

Far less easily solved than the question of military supplies for the Russians was the controversy over a proposed "second front" on the beaches of France. This dispute remained in the minds of the American people from the time that the Russians first demanded a western front (late in 1941) until three and a half years later when the Anglo-American forces finally assaulted the Normandy beaches. Throughout most of this period the New York Times agreed that such a front should be established as soon as possible; yet when Stalin first called for an expeditionary force to share the brunt of Hitler's force, the newspaper treated his claim as presumption. When the controversy first reached the editorial pages, on October 16, 1941, the Times discouraged the landing of British men on the European mainland, contending that the Royal Air Force raids nearly equalled the Russian share in the halting of the German ground forces.[56] In early November, Times editorials argued that the western powers should send supplies to arm the vast Russian manpower reserves, rather than dispatching Britons to their death upon the shores of France. Because of Premier Stalin's poor "reputation for truth-telling and

straight-dealing," the Times took little satisfaction in the Russian leader's November 6th announcement that Russia's ability to withstand the pressure of the German legions depended upon a western front. Again the contention that Russia stood alone against Hitler was denied: "as daily British aerial bombardment of Nazi controlled Europe, and our own just-announced $1,000,000,000 lease-lend credit [which the Times had so recently opposed] so clearly testify, Russia is not 'fighting alone'."[57] With that sentence the New York Times' ended the 1941 edition of the "great second front controversy."

But the controversy was not dormant for long. Times editorials on the second front died down, along with the Soviet demands, in the winter of 1941-1942. When Soviet demands began again, in the spring of 1942, so did Times editorials. But by then the newspaper had become convinced that "the United Nations must strain themselves to the limit--and beyond--to help the Russians to hold this year"[58]--despite the fact that in the interval between "second front editorials" the United States had entered the war, and American as well as British lives were now at stake. The Times still argued, in the summer of 1942, that England had been as instrumental in saving Russia from Hitler as Russia had been in safeguarding the western democracies;[59] but by then the thought of facing Hitler without the aid of Russia was so unpleasant that the New York Times felt that the English and Americans should provide the expeditionary force in France which would supposedly enable the Russians to continue repelling the powerful German armies.

When the Anglo-Russian Alliance was signed on June 11, 1942, the New York Times reminded the Western Allies that "every prompting of self interest supplements Mr. Molotoff's plea to impel the British and American

general staffs to stretch their resources beyond the limits to support the Soviet fighting forces."[60] The great need for a second front to take the pressure off the Russian defenses was reiterated time and again and, in July, 1942, it was contended that "with all our wealth and power we shall never be able to give China or Russia as much as they have given us."[61] The growth of friendly sentiment toward Soviet Russia was accompanied by a new appreciation of the Russian role in halting Hitler. The newspaper certainly did not stand alone in its insistence upon a western assault against the coast of France. A Gallup poll conducted July 31, 1942, demonstrated that forty-eight per cent of those questioned urged a second front immediately. Thirty-four per cent counseled delay until the Anglo-American force was stronger, and eighteen per cent were undecided.[62]

Joseph Stalin continually fired sharply-worded questions and demands toward the West as he became increasingly suspicious of the western governments' plans for a second front.[63] But even these critical outbursts could not upset the determination of the New York Times to be friends with the Soviet government, even if the latter did not reciprocate. An October editorial commented on the Stalin demands, without any sign of rancor. And on November 7, 1942, (exactly a year after an earlier plea for aid had brought forth a claim that Stalin's reputation for lying and cheating made his statement valueless) the right of Americans to take offense at the persistence of Soviet demands for a second front was denied.

> To the defenders of Stalingrad the refusal of Britain and the United States to risk everything in an assault upon the Continent is incomprehensible. We need feel no resentment at such a point of view. . . .But we must also acknowledge that by blood, sweat

> and tears Mr. Stalin and his countrymen have earned the right to say what they think.
>
> . . . We think the whole democratic world, setting aside differences of opinion as to strategy, is willing to say to Mr. Stalin and his people that never in all history, certainly never during the past quarter of a century, has Russia stood so high in the respect and admiration of the free nations. The Russians are comrades in this battle.[64]

The demands of Russian Communists for a second front could not alienate New York Times support for the Russian government during the autumn which saw the epic defense of Stalingrad. As much cannot be said for home-grown Communists. However much the New York Times wanted to support an issue, the support of the American Communist Party for the same issue was enough to make the newspaper step back, dust off its editorial policy, and scrutinize it suspiciously. When New York Communists joined the Russians in agitation for an immediate Anglo-American assault on the European Continent, for example, a Times editorial testily warned them that:

> the people in this country who turned coat after June 22, 1941, cannot hasten it by an instant. They are neither trusted nor respected by the American public.[65]

This comment also reflects the attitude toward international communism which prevailed in New York Times editorials throughout the Second World War. The extent of the reaction against the international Communist movement was demonstrated in the editorial response to the brutal murder of Leon Trotsky, the internationally-minded Red leader who had been driven from his Communist homeland thirteen years before. An earlier attempt upon Trotsky's life, May 25, 1940, was completely ignored by those in charge of the editorial page, and the editorial which followed the successful thrust at Trotsky emphasized the brutality of the victim more than that of the assassin. It was agreed that the revenge wreaked upon Trotsky

was brutal, but "no more ruthless than the Russian Revolution which this consummate firebrand in exile had himself set alight and kept aflame a generation ago."[66]

During World War II, the New York Times adopted a "double standard" in its view of communism. Despite a rapidly improving opinion of Moscow Communists in the later war years, the Times never felt the need of reassessing its earlier opinions about those at home. The keynote for this dichotomy was set forth editorially in April, 1942:

> There is a perfectly clear distinction between the activities of Communists on the Russian front and Communist activities in the New York public schools. We should be ungrateful fools not to aid and endorse the first. We are not called upon to accept the second, any more than Stalin is called upon to permit anti-Communist propaganda in the schools of Moscow.[67]

The newspaper did not deny the rights of Communists to band together in a party, as had the majority of those questioned in a Gallup poll shortly before the German invasion of Russia. (Nearly two-thirds urged repressive measures against the American Communist Party, while only eight per cent asked that nothing be done to the U. S. Reds.)[68] In fact, the journal welcomed the continuation of the American Communist Party as an American Communist Association after the dissolution of the Third Communist International, because "it makes the work of identification easier."[69] Although it did not deny Communists the right to assemble, the Times' conception of Communist "rights" differed markedly from the Marxists' own view. Early in the war, the newspaper questioned the Reds' "right" to be appointed to office [70] and to teach in public schools.[71] As with virtually all of their early assessments of American Communists, the

editorial writers never wavered from these views. The sight of the New York Daily Worker reversing its attitude toward the American and British governments for the sake of the party line served only to make the Times more confident in its continued condemnation of the publishers, staff members, and readers of the Worker.

This continuing opposition to communism on the home-front was an exception, however, to the general trend of New York Times' thought on matters communistic and matters Soviet. American Communists were a domestic rather than an international problem, so a difference in attitude was not totally unexpected. The unchanging status of the stock of American Communists with the New York Times provides a striking contrast with the boom of sentiment, on the American market, for the Russian bear. From the time of the German invasion of Russia to the repulsing of the Nazi besiegers of Stalingrad, there was a steady growth in American appreciation for the Soviet Union. First the people, then the army, and finally the Russian government met with approval. During the year and a half surveyed here, the New York Times made the transition from hatred of everything Russian to respect for Russian capabilities and finally to partial admiration even of Soviet ideals. Thus, by the beginning of 1943 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was accepted by Americans as a full-fledged ally. The picture conveyed by New York Times editorials for the next thirty-two months (the time remaining until the war's end) shows occasional lapses of friendship, but the newspaper's attitude toward the Soviet Union was even more favorable in September, 1945, than it had been in January, 1943. Neither the protracted controversy over the delayed second front nor the

sharp conflicts accompanying the end of the European phase of World War II could rapidly undo the ties of friendship which had, after so many months, bound together Communist Russia with the capitalistic West.

TABLE #1

AMERICAN OPINION ON RUSSIAN POST-WAR COOPERATION

DATE	YES	NO	UNDECIDED, NO OPINION
March 26, 1942	39%	39%	22%
May 6, 1942	45	25	30
June 17, 1942	41	33	26
July 1, 1942	45	26	29
July 15, 1942	50	30	20
July 18, 1942	43	27	30
August 21, 1942	51	25	24
November 19, 1942	51	24	25
November 27, 1942	52	26	22
January 7, 1943	46	29	25
April 6, 1943	44	34	22
June 18, 1943	48	27	25
November 10, 1943	47	27	26
November 15, 1943	48	20	32
December 15, 1943	51	27	22
January 18, 1944	40	27	23
April 8, 1944	50	22	28
June 7, 1944	47	36	17
November 15, 1944	47	35	18
February 20, 1945	55	31	14
May 15, 1945	45	38	17
August 8, 1945	54	30	16
October 17, 1945	38	45	17
October 17, 1945	44	40	16
February 27, 1946	35	52	13
April 10, 1946	45	38	17
September 25, 1946	32	53	15
December 11, 1946	43	40	17

Various polling organizations asked, "Do you think Russia can be trusted to cooperate with us after the war is over?" or a similar question. The rise and fall of the percentage expecting the Russians to cooperate is shown here. There is a double answer for October 17, 1945, because the question changed on that date. The totals for the second entry are for the question, "Do you think Russia will cooperate with us in world affairs?" This was the question for the remainder of the survey. This table was compiled from data in Hadley Cantril's Public Opinion, 1935-1946, pp. 370-1.

FOOTNOTES

[1]By the end of the war this caution was cast aside. On March 3, 1945, the "Topics of the Times" column (p. 12) stated that: "Anyone is a democrat, in this imperfect world of ours, who is an enemy of the Nazi and the Fascist." All footnotes refer to the New York Times unless identified otherwise.

[2]"Russia's Supreme Hour," Oct. 15, 1941, p. 20.

[3]The Times attitude from 1939 to 1941 is described in detail in Donald O. Dewey, "America and Russia, 1939-41: The Views of the New York Times," Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Spring 1967), 62-70.

[4]"May Day," May 1, 1941, p. 22.

[5]"America, Britain and Russia," June 26, 1941, p. 22.

[6]"Mr. Churchill in Moscow," Aug. 18, 1942, p. 20.

[7]Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York, 1955), p. 781.

[8]Public Opinion Quarterly, VI, 152. Those stating that the governments were equally bad, or the Russian government worse, totaled 39.7 per cent (35.1 choosing the former and 4.6 the latter), compared with 40.5 per cent who preferred the Russian government (32.0 saying there was scant difference but that Russia was slightly better, and 8.5 saying that the Russian government was clearly superior). Those without opinion totaled 19.8 per cent.

[9]"The Man With a Hoe," June 28, 1941, p. 14.

[10]"After a Month," July 22, 1941, p. 18.

[11]"Medical Aid to Russia, "August 21, 1941, p. 16.

[12]"Russia's Supreme Hour," Oct. 15, 1941, p.20.

[13]"Russia and the Democracies," Oct. 29, 1941, p.22.

[14]E. g. "Topics of the Times," April 2, 1942, p. 20; or "Topics of the Times," July 2, 1942, p. 16.

[15]"Topics of the Times," Sept. 4, 1941, p. 20.

[16]"The Time to Act Is Now," June 24, 1941, p. 18.

[17]Loc. cit.

[18]"Red Army in Action," July 3, 1941, p. 18.

[19]"Topics of the Times," July 12, 1941, p. 12.

[20]Public Opinion Quarterly, VI, 675

[21]"Ukraine," Aug. 5, 1941, p. 18.

[22]"The Inevitable Front," May 14, 1942, p. 18.

[23]"Behind the Fronts, July 10, 1941, p. 18.

[24]"Topics of the Times," Jan. 13, 1942, p. 18

[25]"Topics of the Times," March 15, 1942, p. 8E

[26]"Rommel and the Beast," June 26, 1942, p. 20; the beast, it should be added, was not Stalin.

[27]"Our Policy Toward Finland," Nov. 6, 1941, p. 22.

[28]"The Earth-Wide Battle," Jan. 25, 1942, p. 6E.

[29]"Topics of the Times," Feb. 1, 1942, p. 6E.

[30]"Topics of the Times," Feb. 14, 1942, p. 14.

[31]"In Golden Samarkand," Feb. 8, 1942, p. 6E.

[32]"Our Stake in Russia," May 21, p. 18.

[33]"After the War," June 14, 1942, p. 10E.

[34]"Anniversary in Russia," June 21, 1942, p. 8E.

[35]"Russia After 25 Years, Nov. 7, 1942, p. 14.

[36]"Topics of the Times," Oct. 9, 1942, p. 20.

[37]"Meanwhile in Russia," July 22, 1943, p. 18.

[38]"Hitler Invades Russia," June 23, 1941, p. 16.

[39]"The Time to Act Is Now," June 24, 1941, p. 18.

[40]"Victories Without End," June 25, 1941, p. 20.

[41]"America, Britain and Russia," June 26, 1941, p. 22.

[42]"Germany Tastes Real War," July 14, 1941, p. 12.

[43]"Mr. Hopkins in Moscow," July 31, 1941, p. 16.

[44]"Russia Is an Ally," Aug. 6, 1941, p. 16,

[45]"Supply Line to Russia," Aug. 27, 1941, p. 18.

[46]"The Great Test Is Coming," Sept. 19, 1941, p. 22.

[47]"The Eastern Front," Sept. 20, 1941, p. 16.

[48]"Idealizing Russia," Oct. 2, 1941, p. 24.

[49]"Not Two Fronts, but Four," Nov. 1, 1941, p. 14.

[50]"Russia, Japan and the United States," Dec. 11, 1941, p. 26

[51]"The Russian Strategy," Dec. 15, 1941, p. 18.

[52]"The War as a Whole, Jan. 2, 1942, p. 22.

[53]"The Indivisible War," Jan. 19, 1942, p. 16.

[54]"Lend-Lease to Siberia," June 27, 1945, p. 18.

[55]Public Opinion Quarterly, VI, 311.

[56]"Topics of the Times," October 16, 1941, p. 20

[57]"Russia's Resistance," Nov. 7, 1941, p. 22.

[58]"The Inevitable Front," May 14, 1942, p. 18.

[59]"Topics of the Times," June 5, 1942, p. 16.

[60]"Russia and the West," June 12, 1942, p. 20.

[61]"The Seige of Asia," July 19, 1942, p. 8E.

[62]Public Opinion Quarterly, VI, 658.

[63]William Appleman Williams, American Russian Relations, 1781-1947 (New York, 1952), p. 265.

[64]"Russia After 25 Years," Nov. 7, 1942, p. 14.

[65]"The Second Front," Sept. 18, 1942, p. 20.

[66]"Trotsky," Aug. 22, 1940, p. 18.

[67]"The Coudert Report," April 24, 1942, p. 16

[68]May 3, 1941. Public Opinion Quarterly, VI, 471.

[69]"Topics of the Times," May 16, 1944, p. 20.

[70]"Topics of the Times," Aug. 2, 1941, p. 14.

[71]"The Coudert Report," April 24, 1942, p. 16.